

Weakness by **Collie Parkillo**

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Summary: Henry Bowers is human, unfortunately. PatrickHenry. T for general darkness and descriptions of sex.

Weakness

10.

Ten years old when they first meet. The winter air is cold and it bites at Patrick's exposed hands. They hurt when he clasps the monkey bars between his fingers and walks along beneath them, too tall to swing from them the way kids are supposed to. There aren't a lot of things Patrick can do the way kids are supposed to.

"You're Patrick Hockstetter." The line that starts the chaos. It comes from the mouth of a greasy-looking, gangly kid that Patrick would know anywhere. Henry Bowers, son of Butch Bowers, who's always getting sent out of the room in class and always using that time to smoke in the hallway and nobody knows how he hasn't gotten caught yet.

"Yeah," he says. "Yeah, that's me."

9.

Nine lives, Patrick thinks. He must have nine lives. Nothing kills him, nothing even hurts him. Patrick calls him a sicko and he laughs in his face and says that Patrick is one to talk. He skins his knee and he gets right back up, blood still running down his calf.

"Do you like my collection?" Patrick asks when they're sitting up in his room. He's pointing at the glass box of dead butterflies Patrick has acquired. He killed them himself, so they aren't as clean as the ones in museums. There are still little smushed parts around their abdomens.

Henry nods, so Patrick knows he isn't really listening to him. Patrick wants to put Henry away in his glass case like the butterflies, but it doesn't look like Henry will be taped down.

8.

All eight classes. Fifth grade year is when they introduce having a different teacher for each class, an unknown concept to Patrick. But he has all eight with Henry, so he follows him around Derry Elementary to room 201, room 203, room 301, room 302, room 204, room 305, room 205 and room 306. Of course, Henry barely attends

any of them.

Fifth grade year is also the year Patrick starts following Henry out of class, not just to class. "What do you even do all this time?" He asks. "I mean, there isn't much else to do other than go t'school."

"Lots of stuff," Henry replies, grinning his wild grin. "Boy, Patrick, you have a lot to learn."

7.

Seven enemies. Henry steeples his fingers and closes his eyes, muttering their names again and again until they become unintelligible. Henry hates them, so of course Patrick hates them too. "Fuckin' D-D-Denbrough thinks he can get pity cards because of his shitty little brat of a dead brother. You know why I hate that, Patrick?"

"Why?" Patrick asks.

"He thinks it's bad having a dead family member. It's a thousand times worse when the bastards are alive." Patrick doesn't have to ask what he's talking about.

6.

Six words. "Don't tell anyone about right now," Henry says, sniffing and wiping his eyes. That's all he says before going into another round of sobs. Another six words. "I'll kill you if you tell." He gasps, sputters, and wipes his eyes. Henry has a lot of other friends, like Vic and Belch, but Patrick is the only one who's ever seen Henry cry.

"What's something you're proud of?" Ms. Smith, his fifth grade teacher asks.

I've seen Henry Bowers cry, Patrick thinks. But he doesn't say that.

5.

Five nights Patrick can't sleep. Sometimes his nightmares are Avery, his face smooth and infantile, untouched by the dirty, rowdy childhood he never had. Avery asks him why, why he'd done it. In his dreams, Patrick can't speak, so he can't tell him that he doesn't know why.

Sometimes his dreams are of Henry. Wild, stupid, angry Henry. Henry asks him if he would kill for him, if he would die for him. Was it worth it, Patrick, Henry asks. Was it worth it giving up your cookie cutter life for a kid from the wrong side of the street? Is Butch Bowers' shitspawn really worth your time?

The word 'yes' is on Patrick's lips when he wakes up.

4.

Four beers. That's how many it takes to get Henry drunk enough to kiss him. Patrick has no idea whose liquor it is, but Henry chugs it like there's no tomorrow. It's like he wants to ruin himself and fill his body with the magic juice inside the blue metal cans until he explodes. He's laughing one breath and crying the next, his arm around Patrick's waist.

Patrick has never drunk a drop of it. He fills the empty cans with water and pretends that he, too, is in the wonderland Henry's mind is in. He finds he doesn't have to pretend as Henry pushes him up against the wall.

His lips are warm. Patrick's always liked playing pretend.

3.

Three orange pom-poms on the clown's suit. It laughs at him, laughs in his face. "Want a balloon, Patrick? I hear queer boys like you are big on balloons. Want one, Patrick? Don't you want one?" But the voice is not the clown's, not really, the voice sounds like Henry's.

Patrick stands frigidly, staring into the clown's empty eyes. You don't scare me, he thinks. I'm Patrick Hockstetter. I killed my baby brother. I kill cats and dogs and bugs. You don't scare me. My eyes are as empty and my soul is as hate-filled as yours.

His hands are trembling.

2.

Two hands. One is Henry's, one is his own. They're both sober. It's warm and wet and soft and they'd might as well be drunk, because the euphoria that's flowing through Patrick's veins and pumping down between his legs feels like it will never leave. But it does. It

stops. Henry's hand freezes, understanding floods his eyes. And his lips curl back in disgust.

1.

One of them is dead, the other might as well be.

Always wanted to do a countdown style fic. Unofficially dedicated to elliemorris, whose PatrickHenry stuff inspired me to step out of my comfort zone a little and write this.